

submitted in an Information Disclosure Statement on October 11, 2001. In the examiner's "Statement of Reasons for Allowance", the examiner stated that there was no evidence in either reference that the claimed hair growth inhibiting compounds therein meet the functional limitations of the instant claim 1. Applicants note, that at least one of the compounds claimed in the skin external preparation of U.S. 6,075,052 and at least one of the plant extracts claimed in the method of U.S. 6,171,595 have an activity as an inhibitor of elastase-like enzymes and therefore meet a functional limitation of instant claim 1.

However, applicants note that the instant method claim 1 is not obvious over composition claims 1-3 of 6,075,052 because there is no suggestion in composition claims 1-3 of U.S. 6,075,052 of a method of inhibiting hair growth by applying an inhibitor of elastase-like enzymes or neutral endopeptidase inhibitor as claimed. Conversely, composition claims 1-3 of U.S. 6,075,052 are not obvious over method claims 1, 3-4 and 6 of the above-identified application because there is no suggestion in method claims 1, 3-4 and 6 of a skin external preparation using compounds of a specific formula, claimed. The present method claims are not obvious over the patented composition claims and the patented composition claims are not obvious over the present method claims.

Moreover, applicants note that the instant claim 1 is not obvious over claims 1-3 of U.S. 6,171,595 because there is no suggestion in claims 1-3 of U.S. 6,171,595 of a method of inhibiting hair growth by applying an inhibitor of elastase-like enzymes or neutral endopeptidase inhibitor as claimed. Conversely, claims 1-3 of U.S. 6,171,595 are not obvious over claims 1, 3-4 and 6 of the above-identified application because there is no suggestion in claims 1, 3-4 and 6 of a method of inhibiting hair growth by applying a plant extract as claimed. The present claims are not obvious over the patented claims and the patented claims are not obvious over the present claims.

Applicants submit that this application remains in condition for allowance and early notification of such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Claims 7-21 (canceled)